with monuments and consistent with archaeological principles, facilities like drinking water and toilets are provided at selected monuments.

[English]

Curtailment of Air India Flights

808. SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India have curtailed its flights to Europe and other destinations this year in order to spare aircraft for Haj pilgrims;

(b) if so, the number of flights curtailed and diverted from their scheduled separately;

(c) whether tour operators from Europe had protested against the schedule modifications made by Air India;

(d) if so, whether Air India staff in Paris has cautioned that due to curtailment of flight frequencies *via* Paris the image of India has been tarnished; and

(e) the steps the Government propose to take to ensure the minimum curtailment of flights?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the period from March to May, 1997, 35 flights to Toronto and 36 flights to Europe were curtailed. Besides, 22 flights were downgraded from B747-200 to A310 on Hong Kong/Osaka route.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. However, Air India gave all possible help to the groups already booked by re-routing/ booking passengers on subsequent flights/transferring them to other carriers.

(e) Government has issued instructions to Air India to ensure that no cancellation of scheduled flights or withdrawal of capacity from routes/sectors is resorted to unless there are compelling operational/technical reasons for doing so. Even in such circumstances, the airline should keep the general public informed well in advance.

Shipment of Minerals from Kandla Port

809. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI :
SHRI VIJAY PATEL :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been brought to the notice of the Government that Bentonite Salt, Bauxite and other basic minerals are being produced in Kutch region of Gujarat;

(b) whether these minerals are being exported to foreign countries for the last 25 years for earning foreign exchange;

(c) whether the exporters find it difficult for shipment from the Kandla Port and have to incure heavy loss because of the handling and weather conditions etc;

(d) whether there has been a consistent demand to the Kandla Port Authority for providing a berth exclusively for use of shipment of these minerals from that port; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. Although the traders have demanded to provide one berth exclusively for the Shipment of these minerals, keeping in view the available infrastructure facilities, it is not possible to provide one berth exclusively for export of these minerals as the demand from other export commodities is of a much larger extent.

Minority Status to Central Universities

810. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA :
SHRI VIJAY GOEL :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the Government's policy on grant of 'Minority' status to Central Universities;

(b) whether there is any Central universities in the country which have been granted 'minority' status and if so, the names of such universities;

(c) whether there has been an agitation at the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi and if so, the demand of the agitationists;

(d) whether the demands have also been supported by the National Commission on Minorities and if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government have examined their demand and if so, the Government's stand thereon; and